

ACTION ALERT

From WASAVP

The Washington Association for Substance Abuse and Violence Prevention

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Respect Washington Voters and *Just Say No* to the Privatization of Liquor Distribution!

Please [contact your legislators](#) immediately to express your opposition to privatization of liquor distribution.

In an attempt to balance our state budget, the Legislature is considering a proposal (by East Coast venture capitalists) to privatize liquor distribution in Washington, a venture now run by the Washington State Liquor Control Board (LCB). It is shortsighted to consider such a proposal at this late point in the session just because of an anticipated large cash windfall.

Three times in the past year, voters of Washington have responded overwhelmingly that the current liquor control system is convenient, adequate and protects our communities. Through two ballot initiatives, and more recently an Elway Poll commissioned by the governor, citizens of Washington have said, “if it isn’t broke don’t fix it!”

If the Legislature and liquor-related business interests would like to partner with public safety and labor stakeholders to thoroughly assess our control system and identify opportunities for improvement, then we welcome that. In fact we believe this is a necessary step to take before making any major changes to the system.

The current proposal by the newly formed Washington Beverage Company (a front for the East Coast venture capitalists who also own the Maine liquor distribution system) is yet to be presented to the public, and there is much question as to its viability for providing the kind of revenue. In 2010, the LCB took in \$74 million from liquor distribution; under this proposal that number drops to \$15 million in 2012 (an 80% drop!). So other than an initial \$300 million windfall, which is not guaranteed and is being budgeted as such, it appears that Washington state will lose major revenue over the long run from this proposal.

With no stakeholder input or thorough assessment of the system, it is clear that this proposal is premature and should not be considered in this session, especially as a way to save portions of the safety net when the revenue is not guaranteed.

This privatization effort has already passed through in the House of Representatives budget so we must act fast to voice our opposition to the [Senate](#) today!